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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000509

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD, EUR/RPM AND EUR/ERA  
OSD FOR POPOVICH

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - AUGUST 20, 2009

REF: A. ZAGREB 459

[1](#)B. STATE 68590

[1](#)1. (U) MESIC TO TRAVEL TO CUBA THEN UNGA:

Croatian President Stjepan Mesic, who is nearing the end of his second and final term in office, is planning to visit Cuba prior to his participation in the 2009 UN General Assembly (UNGA). Mesic last traveled to Cuba in 2006 when Havana hosted the conference of the non-aligned movement; Croatia is an observer in the NAM. Mesic will lead the Croatian delegation to the UNGA (REFS A and B), and Mesic will probably arrive in New York on September 21 and stay through September 24. (DMEGES)

[1](#)2. (SBU) VILOVIC SET TO BE CROATIA'S NEW REP TO THE UN:

Acting Croatian Ambassador to the United Nations, Ranko Vilovic, on September 1 should formally assume the duties of Chief of Mission in New York and become Croatia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Security Council. Local media began speculating that Vilovic would be given the position in late July after the Croatian Parliament publicly recommended to President Mesic to oust Croatia's previous PermRep, Neven Jurica. Mesic's assistant foreign policy advisor confirmed to us that in early August President Mesic and Prime Minister Kosor signed the act that would formally replace Jurica with Vilovic as UN PermRep. Vilovic is a career diplomat with several years of experience working within the UN system and has been Jurica's deputy in New York. Jurica, who has not been actively at his post since mid-April when he was hospitalized for internal bleeding, is now under investigation in Croatia for alleged corruption involving the misuse of some \$150,000 of the UN Mission's budget. (DMEGES)

[1](#)3. (SBU) PROSECUTORS SCORE TACTICAL POINT IN RONCEVIC IMMUNITY DENIAL:

Acting on a request from Chief State Prosecutor Mladen Bajic, a parliamentary committee on August 19 accepted that Croatia's recently adopted Criminal Procedure laws allow prosecutors to open formal investigations or parliamentarians without requiring suspects first be stripped of their immunity. Following the decision, the Office for Suppression of Corruption and Organized Crime (USKOK) opened a formal investigation against MP and former Defense and Interior Minister Berislav Roncevic in a case dating back several years for irregularities in a procurement of trucks at the Ministry of Defense. The opposition Social Democrats (SDP) on the committee, however, have accused Bajic of dragging his feet on the investigation and moved to immediately strip Roncevic of immunity based on submissions from USKOK. The SDP motion failed on a 4-4 vote. All four of the ruling HDZ party's committee members voted that it was premature to lift Roncevic's immunity, and such a step would only be necessary once indictments are filed. Prosecutors claimed to Poloff

that the decision was a tactical victory with broader implications, because it makes it easier to conduct formal investigations against individuals with immunity, including judges, parliamentarians, and Croatian diplomats. Prosecutors will now be able to investigate corruption charges against high officials all the way up to the point when they are ready to seek an indictment without having to approach administrative or parliamentary committees and risk leaks in often sensitive investigations. (CZimmer)

14. (U) CROATIAN SERB EXTRADICTED FROM UK TO STAND FOR WAR CRIMES RETRIAL:

The UK extradited Milan Spanovic to Croatia on August 19. A Croatian court found Spanovic guilty in absentia and sentenced him to 20 years in prison for war crimes against Croat civilians in the area around Glina in 1991. Spanovic, a former member of Croatian Serb paramilitary units who was arrested in Britain in October 2006, spent the past three years fighting the extradition request. Since he was originally tried in absentia, Spanovic will be able to seek a new trial, one that is likely to draw international scrutiny due to several additional pending extradition requests in EU and other countries. (CZimmer)

15. (U) SCHOOLS ARE OUT, LIBRARIES ARE IN:

As a part of Embassy Zagreb's Library Outreach Program, APAO Ken Wetzel, Summer Intern Katie Beall, and IRC Director Maca Bahlen recently visited public libraries in the towns of Duga Resa, Ogulin, Krapina and Krapinske Toplice. Since 2007, the Public Affairs Section has visited 21 libraries under this outreach program, which focuses on improving connections with communities in less-developed and war-impacted regions of Croatia. The visits include courtesy calls with local politicians such as members of the city council or the

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mayor's office and frequently generate local media coverage. The Embassy also donates English language materials, including Sabre Foundation books, encyclopedias, almanacs, periodicals donated by the embassy community, information about NATO, IIP publications and posters. The visits frequently generate requests for embassy speakers, as well as visits to the chancery under the embassy "inreach" program. (KWetzel)  
WALKER